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The Workshops in Public Libraries Program (WPLP), a partnership between an academic library and three public libraries providing computer instruction, is considered to be a resounding success by all stakeholders. This qualitative study reviews some of its strengths and weaknesses as they relate to sustainability and reliability. The workshops will be analyzed from several different perspectives in order identify the elements that contribute to its sustainability and make it a potential model for academic and public library collaborative programming. Information was collected from all stakeholders and participants regarding their involvement and their perception of its strengths and weaknesses.

- Semi-structured interviews were conducted with professional librarians at the stakeholder libraries.
- The crucial role of the coordinator of the program was analyzed.
- A survey was done of the volunteers who have participated in the program as workshop instructors.

Headings:

Cooperative library systems—Teaching
Cooperation—College and university libraries
Cooperation—Public libraries
Computer-assisted instruction—Case studies
Internet—Teaching

SUSTAINABILITY AND REPLICABILITY IN AN ACADEMIC-PUBLIC LIBRARY
COLLABORATIVE INSTRUCTION PROGRAM: A CASE STUDY

by
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Introduction

The Workshops in Public Libraries Program (WPLP)¹ is a unique example of a collaborative effort between an academic library and several public libraries because it is specifically designed to deliver computer and information literacy programming to the general public. It demonstrates interesting and important possibilities as a model for similar programs in other contexts. For example, a program patterned after this one might provide free continuing education services through the public library to small communities where public libraries tend to be small and poorly funded. By enlisting volunteers from the staff of an academic library who are fluent in other languages, a program like this one might provide information literacy training to new immigrants who have limited English proficiency. A partnership of this kind gives students in Information and Library Science programs an opportunity to gain valuable experience in instruction in a public library setting.

The program is considered to be a success based on the satisfaction of the stakeholders and participants. However, there is a question as to whether or not this program is sustainable over time.

Public librarians today frequently find they are not only building collections and making them accessible but “they have become the general public’s last-resort providers of tech support” (Corcoran, 1997). Due to the blending of print and electronic resources

¹ The description of the program has been fictionalized to protect the privacy of participants in the study.

in public libraries, librarians are expected to teach computer skills classes and information literacy to their patrons in the same way they have traditionally taught adult literacy programs in the past. This phenomenon is occurring at the same time many public libraries are experiencing budget cuts. Does the WPLP offer a solution to the problem? Is it easily replicable in other settings? This study attempts to answer to these two questions.

Background

In the summer of 2004, the Board of Trustees of a robust public library in a small town in the South East United States voted to forgo filtering of their public access computers as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act and by so doing, they forfeited federal funds available for public libraries. The members of the board determined that it was preferable to educate the public about computer and Internet use rather than limit free public access to information. The reality was, however, that the public library did not have funds to implement a free computer and Internet literacy program for adults at the library. At the time an Information and Library Science (ILS) student at a local research university was a member of the library's Board of Trustees. She suggested that a partnership with the academic library might be a possible solution to the public library's need to provide adult education programming. She approached a library staff member with an informal proposal and in March 2005 the WPLP was implemented.

The program began as an informal agreement with the academic library. Administered by a staff member in the academic library's reference and instruction division, the program enlisted volunteers from both library staff and the ILS graduate student body to conduct computer and Internet literacy workshops in the public library's computer lab. Initially, the program was loosely structured and coordinated with the assistance of a graduate student from ILS. A listserv was set up to facilitate

communication among volunteers in the program. Volunteers were recruited mostly through announcements in ILS classes and by word-of-mouth. The volunteer instructors, both ILS graduate students and also library staff members, developed lesson plans and delivered instruction in computer and Internet literacy as well as many special topics including: computer instruction in Spanish, health information, genealogy, library research skills, investment and financial information, gardening information, job search, and resume writing.

It was not feasible to try to schedule a time for workshops during regular library hours because the public access computers were in very high demand. So the workshops were conducted from 8:30 to 9:30 in the morning before the library was opened to the public. Three workshops were scheduled each week depending on the availability of instructors. Two or more volunteer instructors participated in each workshop: one instructor and one or more “floaters” who provided individual coaching to participants in the class and other assistance to the instructor as needed. Volunteer instructors were encouraged to use library staff parking and enter the library at the staff entrance for the workshops. In order to control access to the building, the floater was usually stationed at the front door to assist patrons as they arrived for the workshops and again as they exited the building.

There were computers with Internet access for 18 participants and an improvised multi-media set-up was arranged to project images from a main computer to facilitate instruction. This system was upgraded to a permanently installed projector and screen during the winter 2004 and additional computer stations were added for a total of 21.

Handouts for the computer and Internet workshops were prepared based on open content resources developed by Millennium Learning Centres, an initiative of the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa. Each volunteer instructor developed the lesson plan for the sessions they were to teach based on these handouts. Based on their interests and expertise, volunteer instructors prepared handouts, pathfinders and other supplementary material for all the special topics workshops.

After the first season of workshops, the program expanded to include two other area libraries, a dual-use library located in an area middle school and a small library modeled after an Internet cafe located in the downtown area of the same community. Both of these facilities were affiliated with a regional library consortium. Yet neither of these libraries had sufficient resources to provide adult instructional programming. Both of the libraries presented challenging difficulties for designing instructional workshops. Like the larger public library, the demand for public computers during regular hours was such that workshops were scheduled either before the library opened to the public or after hours. Both had a more limited number of public access computers so registration for the workshops was limited. The computers in these two libraries were not arranged in such a way as to be conducive to classroom instruction nor did they have projection equipment available for workshop use.

One of the libraries operates on reduced hours from 3:30 to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Sundays. The workshops at this library were initially held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00. Due to a lack of interest during those times, they were switched to Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 10:00 before the library was open to the

public with better results. The library has a total of 16 public computers, 4 of which are PCs and the rest are Macs. These computers are not located all together in a lab but are separated into two banks of computers interspersed among the book stacks. Classes are normally limited to four participants so workshops might be presented on the PCs rather than having them working on two different computer platforms.

The other small library provides a collection of current popular fiction and a public access computer lab and is in a location convenient to the downtown area of a small community. It has a total of five public access PCs with Internet access. It also has wireless Internet access so on several occasions participants have brought their own laptop computers into the library for the workshop. Workshops at this venue take place on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00. A library staff member is on hand to open the library for the workshops and normally serves either as instructor or floater for the sessions. When the workshops began here, a portable projector and screen on loan from the academic library were set up to facilitate instruction. However, the setup proved cumbersome and was discontinued, which made the help of a floater much more crucial for effective instruction.

Public demand for the workshops has increased steadily since the program began. In the fall 2005, 56 workshops were scheduled in three public libraries and 100 volunteer instructors were scheduled to teach the sessions. Over 200 library patrons received computer, Internet, and information literacy instruction during the season. By popular demand, several three-day workshops were developed to teach computer skills in Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. The spring 2006 season was similar to that of the

fall with 53 workshop overall in the three libraries requiring 100 volunteer instructors to teach the computer skills and information literacy workshops to over 300 library patrons.

A Web site for instructors who teach in the WPLP was initiated with information specifically for them. There they have access to a Master Calendar including scheduling information for instructors and floaters, information about teaching at each of the venues, sign-up forms to volunteer to teach at any of the sessions, a report form to collect statistics about attendance and outcomes as well as links to handouts and other teaching aids and other information. Developed by a team including the administrator, the program coordinator, and an academic librarian, this website has been an invaluable tool for coordinating the program.

In addition to the on-going workshops, volunteers in the program have begun to develop a series of on-line interactive tutorials based on the workshop topics. These tutorials will be available to the public from the academic library Web site and the WPLP Web site.

Literature Review

Given the multifaceted nature of the WPLP it is useful to examine several different aspects of the literature. Two major themes are represented in this study: institutional collaboration and volunteerism. First the program is a collaboration involving several different library institutions, both public and academic, at differing levels of involvement. As such, it is important to understand what the literature has recorded about collaborations between libraries and the ways they have worked in other settings.

Collaboration between public libraries and non-profit organizations, public and private businesses, schools and academic institutions in well-managed innovative partnerships can be highly profitable for all stakeholders. These partnerships can provide resource sharing that will benefit the community at large and each of the institutions involved by maximizing resources and services. This review of the literature will provide insight into cooperative efforts in libraries as well as some examples of ways libraries have traditionally participated in consortia, partnerships with other institutions and other collaborative efforts. It will examine practices that are important to insure successful collaborations.

First it is helpful to examine the literature to gain some insight into some of the basic characteristics of collaborations in general. Four main components are considered to be necessary for successful collaboration: shared vision, reciprocal trust, comparable

investment, and distinctive goals. (Todaro, 2005-2006; Brown, 2003; and Lukas,)

Shared vision refers to the commonality between missions and purposes between disparate organizations or institutions that provide a common ground for joint effort. Brown describes the shared vision of the institutions in one partnership as “the same values” (Ibid, p. 2). Among many motives for collaboration, Todaro includes resource sharing, resolution of common problems, and community building.

For a collaboration to be viable all parties must maintain a high level of trust in each other. Some of the factors that contribute to mutual trust are effective communication, time for meetings to coordinate objectives and activities, as well as ongoing assessment of outcomes. A lack of trust can also lead to turf wars. “Many collaborators are overly protective of their turf and the turf of their users, customers, or patrons... including loss of patron base, loss of finances, loss of status, and loss of their identity, etc.” (Todaro, 2005/2006, p.147).

Successful collaborations require that each partner make meaningful contributions and all parties to the agreement must perceive some beneficial return on any investment in the efforts and activities of the partnership. Lukas writes, “True collaboration requires a commitment to shared goals, a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility, mutual authority and accountability for success, and sharing of resources, risks and rewards” (p. 1).

Lastly, common, as well as distinct, goals must shape the process of collaboration. A mandate to serve the general public is common to both public libraries and academic libraries in public institutions and serving the good of the local community may be a goal of collaboration between these two kinds of institutions. However, in a partnership they

may realize some goals that are not shared as well. Public libraries may seek to increase library use in general while the academic institution may seek opportunities to enhance its relationship with the local community.

An examination of literature relative to partnerships between academic libraries and public are of particular interest to this case study of the WPLP. However, it has been difficult to identify studies that are specifically related to this kind of collaboration. Traditionally academic libraries use the term outreach to describe those activities that connect them to other departments within their own institutions and examples of active alliances between academic and public libraries are less common.

Cawthorne (2003) describes how an academic library can strengthen relationships with students and faculty in each academic department and the research centers and institutes that compose the campus as a whole in order to promote the broad range of library resources available to the academic community. (Cawthorne, 2003)

Lippincott (2004), on the other hand, illustrates how university libraries can use building and renovation projects to promote collaboration between various units of the academic institution. She demonstrates how the library can actively cooperate with other departments on campus and use that influence to contribute to more dynamic collaborative efforts between departments by providing spaces where they can come together to work on joint projects. (Lippincott, 2004) In both of these cases, outreach is expressed as those activities that engage the library with other divisions within their own institution rather than efforts to go beyond the university and engage in initiatives in the local community.

Academic libraries also often engage in partnerships with other institutions in an

attempt to share resources and negotiate more favorable prices for expensive electronic resources. These consortia frequently included libraries of all types. TexShare is an example of this kind of consortia. In this initiative, many different libraries including public libraries, regional libraries, academic libraries of all sizes and school libraries in the state of Texas banded together to provide access to both print and electronic resources for the general public. (Wright, 2005)

One distinct kind of partnership between academic and public libraries is described in the literature as joint use libraries. Some examples of joint use libraries include the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in San José California and the Southeast Florida Library Information Network in five counties in southeast Florida. In each of these cases, academic libraries and public libraries have seamlessly merged their buildings, computer systems, web sites, and telecommunications infrastructure into one facility. In addition staff and services and strategic planning are co-managed. (Hayashi, 2005; Imhoff, 2001) Many public libraries engage in similar partnerships with K-12 public schools. Some examples of this kind of initiative include the El Paso County Library in Clint, Texas, the Carrboro Branch Library in Carrboro, North Carolina and several libraries in Washoe County, Nevada. (Honig-Bear, 2001; Leinaweaver, April, 2005; Quiroz, 2003)

Schneider (2003) describes some of the motivating factors that might lead academic libraries to engage in partnerships with public libraries. Public universities in particular may be required by governmental or institutional mandates to perform services that promote the public good because they receive public funds. Academic libraries may also engage in public outreach in order to foster goodwill in the community and alleviate

the “town/gown” divide many university towns experience. In addition, specific partnerships may be prompted as a direct response to specific emergencies or extenuating circumstances in the local community. (Schneider, 2003) Many private universities frequently engage in community outreach as well. For example, Duke University partnered with the Durham Public Schools in a program funded by AT&T to promote educational technology in schools. (*Examples of partnerships focused on information literacy*, 2006)

Public libraries have a long-standing tradition of collaboration with other institutions. Brown (2003) describes several collaborations that were the result of Powerful Partners Collaboration Grant participants in North Carolina. Two of these initiatives include public library partners. For a project between Wake County Public Schools and the Wake County Public Libraries, “technologically fluent teens were selected and trained to serve as tutors to help other teens gain skills in computer and information literacy” (Brown, 2003). The Pettigrew Regional Library, Perquimans County Library, and area schools developed a partnership “for promoting readers among families in this rural community in eastern North Carolina” (Brown, 2003)

The WPLP relies heavily on the participation of volunteers so an examination of volunteerism in libraries is important to this case study. A review of the literature shows that library professionals have mixed views about volunteer programs in public libraries. While libraries have often relied on volunteer programs in general, some studies report that not all library professionals agree on the desirability of promoting them in public libraries.

There are many compelling reasons why library professionals resist employing

volunteers in their institutions. While volunteers do not receive monetary compensation for their time, these programs can incur significant expense. For example, most studies agree that it is preferable to have a professional staff member manage volunteer programs. Time, effort and expertise are involved in recruiting volunteers, training them, coordinating the program, overseeing implementation, and evaluating both the outcomes and the volunteers. This would naturally require either hiring a manager or dedicating professional staff time to the program. (Volunteers: We Couldn't Do It Without Them! [Videotape.].1997)

There is also the feeling among some professionals that volunteerism is a form of exploitation. “We all perhaps unwittingly subscribe to an exploitation of people by capitalizing on the knowledge and skills of volunteers who have not prospect of a job.” (Conway, 2000)

In addition, library professionals often feel that employing volunteers can be detrimental to the profession. It might be an indication that professionals are not required to perform the jobs in a library, which would diminish the need for highly skilled professionals requiring higher salaries and increased budgets to provide funds for additional professional staff members for expanded services. Reed (1994) states,

One colleague of mine refers to visible need for increased library support as the ‘pothole approach.’ No city will ever be motivated to spend precious resources on filling potholes if concerned citizens get out there and fill them themselves. Not only will money for filling potholes be hard to get if there is no visible problem, but concerned citizens are unlikely to have the skill necessary to fill potholes well enough to provide a somewhat lasting solution...we don’t want to attempt to meet these needs with concerned citizens who often don’t have the skills to do the job properly. As with the pothole metaphor, if the job is done by amateurs, it not only reduces our chance to get funding, but the quality of the job itself suffers, creating a definite decline in service delivery. (p. 7)

Other objections to the use of volunteers in public libraries include:

- Dependability
- Sustainability of programs
- Security issues
- Liability risks

In contrast, however, many libraries have reported that volunteers can be a driving force for improving the quality of service that fulfills their missions in the face of increasingly limited budgets. Library services can be expanded, while skilled, professional staff can focus their time and efforts on other duties that require their expertise. In some cases, library hours can be extended providing greater accessibility to library faculties, resources, and services. As Reed states, “With good management, volunteers will definitely mean a new gain in the number of “people hours: you have available to deliver library service to your community” (Reed, 1994, p.12)

Many studies report that volunteers in public libraries perform mostly mundane jobs requiring less skill such as: book repair, shelving, create bulletin boards, assist with programs (Baldwin, 1996). In other cases, the volunteers have received specialized training to perform additional tasks in both one-on-one and classroom instruction, outreach, and customer service (Linke & Breitenbach, 2000).

Using volunteers in public libraries can be a powerful public relations tool. They serve as liaisons between the library and the community. The library gains valuable insight into the needs and attitudes of the community and the volunteers serve as advocates for the library to the community promoting goodwill to the community at large and positively influencing public policy makers. Volunteers also serve as advocates providing important networks between the public, policy makers and the library. (Reed, 1994, p. 21)

When skillfully managed, volunteer programs in public libraries can be an

effective means to a desirable end. They should be considered as an important resource to fulfill the library's mission and provide quality service to the customer (Linke & Breitenbach, 2000, p. 81).

From the standpoint of the individual, participation in a volunteer program can provide a number of benefits both tangible and intangible. Benefits to youth who volunteer include:

- A safe place to do something worthwhile after school and during the summer months.
- Meeting new friends with similar interests.
- Establishing relationships with adult staff members.
- Polishing library skills.
- Learning responsibility and self-discipline.
- Developing of skills for the working world.
- Opportunities for employment (Baldwin, 1996; Todaro, 2000)

Adult volunteers share some of the same benefits. In addition, they can gain a sense of self-worth by making a positive contribution to a worthwhile enterprise, by actively contributing to the well being of others, and by using valuable skills in new ways. Because public libraries are often considered a community center, volunteers gain a strong sense of community as they actively contribute for the benefit of their neighbors (Fialkoff, 2004, p. 8). In addition, libraries often take volunteerism a step farther by providing formal training and development to the participant through service-learning programs. Among other benefits, these programs provide opportunities to enhance personalized education for students; to learn positive values, leadership, citizenship, and personal responsibility; and to develop teaching, speaking, and interpersonal skills (Lawton, 2001; Sager, 1991).

Older adults also experience benefits through volunteer activities. Participation in volunteer programs in non-profit organizations can be a generative activity providing

opportunities to make a positive contribution that can be considered a legacy to the community. In addition, it provides activities that contribute to continuing, life-long learning and to an active lifestyle (Narushima, 2005)

During times of budgetary cuts and increased demand for services both collaborative partnership and carefully managed volunteer programs can be keys to successfully managing public libraries. In order to gain a clear understanding of what it takes to develop a successful and sustainable collaboration a review of literature about successful collaborations in general was conducted to identify some common characteristics of viable partnerships and how the WPLP fits into the framework of a successful program. Lukas and Andrews define collaboration as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals” (Lukas, “Four Keys...”) They identify three different levels for partnerships based on the level of engagement required to meet the goals of the partnership: cooperation, which is the most informal and is characterized by shorter, less formal agreements and limited resource sharing; coordination, which involves more planning and commitment with more formal roles, a higher level of dedication and a greater commitment of resources; and collaborations, which require the highest level of commitment on the part of all partners resulting in a more permanent endeavor and requiring more resources and greater involvement by all partners.

Brown (2003) has defined successful partnerships based on four common elements: shared vision, mutual trust, distinctive goals, and time. She also identifies several concerns that may create obstacles to continued success for a partnership between institutions. “Lack of time and strategies for time management were obstacles” (Brown,

2003, p. 5). In addition, motivation tends to decrease when a lack of communication causes enthusiasm to lessen and inhibits continued commitment on the part of some or all of the partners.

Methods

In order to analyze the potential for sustainability and replicability of the WPLP key stakeholders were identified. For purposes of this study, the term “stakeholder” refers to those entities that have a direct share in the investment of resources in the program and a share in any risk represented in participation of the program. The stakeholders in this case can expect to receive some kind of return on their investment in the program. These stakeholders include the academic library and the three public libraries that participate in the workshops; however, there may be additional potential and even more appropriate stakeholders that emerge over the course of the study.

“Investment” as it relates to this study includes costs, whether tangible or intangible, to the stakeholders. Investment in the program is an indicator of each stakeholder’s level of active involvement in the collaboration. The quantifiable costs as identified in interviews with librarians include staff time dedicated to any aspect of the program including: public library staff time to promote the workshops, register participants, prep for each session, transition from workshops to public access in the computer labs and a minimal amount of staff time spent in communication between the library and the program coordinator including several meetings to organize the program; university staff time to organize and oversee the workshops, develop and manage the workshop Web sites, and prepare and lead workshop sessions. Some other negligible

costs to all stakeholders include cost of materials such as copies of handouts, floppy disks and blank CDs as well as server space for the Web sites.

In most ventures there exists some form of risk. While the risk in the case of the workshop program is minimal it does bear mentioning as an element of this evaluation. The first and most logical risk is the potential loss of return on the investment. For example, if the workshops had not been attended or had been discontinued due to lack of interest on the part of the public library patrons the cost incurred, particularly the cost of equipment, would have failed to produce a desirable benefit to offset that cost.

As will be discussed later, one of the potential returns on the stakeholders' investment in the program is an enhanced public image in the local community. There exists a potential risk that the institutions' reputations might suffer damage if those involved either as administrators or volunteers engaged in misconduct that would adversely reflect on the institutions.

Any institution that engages in a collaborative venture like the Workshops in Public Libraries does so with the expectation of receiving some kind of return on its investment whether tangible or intangible. The return should contribute at some level to the mission or strategic plan of the institution and its goals for the partnership.

The volunteer instructors are participants in the program who do not share significantly in the primary investment of resources or the risks at the same level as stakeholders yet they receive a direct if not tangible benefit by participating in the program. Participants, however, may also incur some minimal personal costs, such as time in preparation and instruction as well as transportation to and from workshops.

Volunteer instructors are vital to the program as they provide the quality instruction that is so valuable to the public library patrons who attend.

Several different methods were used to analyze the Workshops in Public Libraries to obtain a clear in-depth view of its sustainability and replicability. “Sustainability” refers to the possibility that there are elements of the program in place that would allow it to continue to function and grow indefinitely over time and if it can be shown that the program could serve as a model for similar programs in other settings it could be determined to be “replicable.”

The methods used to measure these elements of the program include interviews with librarians and library administrators associated with each of the institutions actively engaged in the collaboration. In addition, an in-depth analysis of the role of coordinator will be included. Finally, a survey of both the university librarians and the ILS Master’s students who participated as volunteer administrators and instructors in the workshops was conducted. These elements provide the multi-layered analysis used to evaluate the program.

Results

Interview results

Four face-to-face interviews with professional librarians were conducted as part of this study, including both public and academic librarians. Questions were analyzed to address four basic themes relative to collaborations in general including: shared vision, mutual trust, shared investment/risks, and distinct goals. Table 1 provides an overview of themes that resulted from the interviews. Outreach and prior experience with partnerships were identified as major ideas that elicited responses related to shared vision. Librarians' perceptions of the program and responses to questions about the impact of the program on library staff and services resulted in allusions to outcomes and distinct goals. Tangible costs for this program are minimal. One of the public libraries experienced a significant expenditure for equipment. Otherwise the costs to all institutions were similar and limited to staff time and minimal incidental costs including photocopies and other materials. The academic institution provides extra support by providing server space for the two Web sites.

Table 1

Interviews with librarians	
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efforts to connect • Based on gaps in patron knowledge/experience at reference desk • Based on users' needs • Going out into the community • Accessible collections • Special programming • Teacher training: K-12, higher education
Experience with partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students community service in children's service and programming • Maintenance of map collection • Not in reference • Teacher training • Online instruction
Workshops in Public Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needed • Professional • Beneficial • Intimate (Personal) • Free • Outreach • Experience • Positive • Praiseworthy • Collaborative
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Minimal incidental costs • Equipment
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff attended workshops • Additional tasks for some staff • Public library patrons express gratitude for free service • No expressed interest on part of staff to participate actively • Staff time diverted from primary user community • Library staff experienced teaching in distinct setting • Opportunity to interact with general public

Analysis of the coordinator's role

An initial meeting was held to plan the workshop program. An academic librarian agreed to serve as administrator of the program and a graduate assistant served as

coordinator. When the program began, the administrator and coordinator of the program spent between 10 and 12 hours per week organizing the workshops, enlisting volunteers, scheduling workshops and coordinating with public librarians. Workshops were scheduled on a monthly basis and scheduling was based on availability of instructors with topics selected by the instructors. Calendars were produced in print form only and posted at the public library. A listserv was set up to facilitate communication with all parties involved.

As the Program expanded into two additional venues, coordination of program required considerably more time so during the summer of 2005, an ILS graduate student was recruited to work 20 hours a week and approximately 5 – 10 additional hours per week as an internship for credit in the ILS Master's Program. The graduate assistant continued to work as coordinator for the WPLP at the end of the appointment spending between 10 and 20 hours weekly on related activities.

The program coordinator established two main goals for the summer. The first was to formalize a curriculum for the workshops and develop a schedule for the summer workshops at all the public libraries. The schedule was determined and volunteers were enlisted to take responsibility for instruction. Workshops for special topics were scheduled according to instructor availability.

The second goal for the season was to design a Web site for the program. The administrator and the coordinator, working with an additional library staff member who became Web master for the program, designed the Web site with several specific goals in mind: to promote the workshops, display the calendar of workshops and facilitate the registration process for workshop participants. The Web site was to include a workshop

schedule, workshop descriptions, an on-line registration form, and other information about the workshops with direct links to the host libraries' Web sites. This Web site was linked to a page on the academic library Web site and the calendar was linked to the Web site of one of the participating libraries.

At the end of the summer workshop season an additional Web site was designed to streamline the process of recruiting and scheduling volunteer instructors for the program. This Web site included an “About” page describing the program, pages with information relevant to conducting workshops at each of the three public libraries, links to the Web site of each library institution and a master calendar that listed not only the workshop schedule but also volunteer assignments to each workshop. Two online forms were included: one for volunteers to use to sign up to teach or float at a workshop and one for volunteers to use to report attendance statistics and other information as a workshop report after each workshop had been conducted. In addition, a Web page linked to digital versions of the handouts and other materials for the workshops were made available to instructors. This Web site was not linked to other public pages and the URL was shared with volunteers and prospective volunteers via the program listserv.

Each season the program coordinator developed a schedule of workshops approximately two weeks before the workshops are scheduled to begin based on participant suggestions and requests, input from the public librarians and input from volunteers. This schedule was then posted on both the public Web site and the instructors Web site. An academic library staff member, who posts regular updates to the master calendar and the public schedule, manages these Web sites.

Beginning the third season of the program, the program administrator and coordinator planned and delivered a volunteer orientation prior to the beginning of each workshop season. The purpose of these orientation sessions is to provide information to prospective volunteer instructors, familiarize volunteers with the resources available on the program Web sites, and provide basic teaching guidelines to volunteers. While the administrator and coordinator are always available to lend assistance to volunteer instructors, the instructors are expected to develop their own lesson plans for the workshops.

Participant registration is tracked by public library staff at the Chapel Hill Public Library and the coordinator tracks participant registration at both the other libraries. In addition, the coordinator recruits volunteers, tracks instructor sign-up for each workshop making sure all sessions are covered, tracks statistical information as the workshops are held, and prepares regular reports to the administrator and the public librarians as well as updates to the program volunteers. In addition, the coordinator insures that the instructor for each of the workshops has access to handouts, registration lists, evaluations and other materials as needed for the workshop.

Survey results

Participants in the survey had all shown an interest in participating in the program as floater/instructor and had received information and regular updates about the program. They were all either Master's students in the ILS program or they were academic librarians. Seventeen surveys were returned out of 55 that were distributed. Of these 17, all respondents reported having participated actively in the workshops. Overall, all

respondents expressed a positive attitude to the program. Although, all respondents indicated that they had participated as floater and/or instructor, 6 indicated that they would like to have participated more but were unable to do so due to schedule conflicts and only 2 indicated they felt they didn't have enough teaching experience.

Table 2 indicates the responses for the item related to the benefits respondents indicated they had received as a result of participation in the program. In addition, three respondents indicated that they considered it a benefit to them to gain a better understanding of public libraries and public library patrons and their need for instruction in the topics being presented at the workshops. One respondent expressed appreciation "for the opportunity to try out a new environment [getting a feel for public librarianship] without having to try out a new environment without having to commit to an entire semester or degree program!"

Table 2

Benefits of participating in the program	Results
Satisfaction of helping others	94.1%
Gain confidence as public speaker	47.1%
Improved teaching skills	64.7%
Help to define career goals	47.1%
Course credit for field experience	35.3%

All respondents indicated that they would recommend their peers participate in the program. When responding to the question "Why or Why not?" most responses directly reflected that participation in the program would be beneficial to their peers in the same ways they felt it benefited them. One respondent commented, "Great

experience for library instruction and design, as well as public speaking. Good role models and lots of helpful, positive feedback from other participants.”

When asked about interactions with public library personnel at the workshop sites, responses indicated that they either didn’t have encounters with public librarians, were neutral about them or they had very positive interactions. Two respondents indicated that they had had negative encounters with public librarians pointing out that they were unresponsive to requests for help or appeared to be unwilling be actively involved.

When asked if they would be willing to promote a similar kind of collaborative program in the context of future professional positions in either academic or public libraries, all but one respondent replied “Yes.” One respondent indicated “Maybe” and commented that it seemed to him/her that the program was dependent on a large body of volunteers with the specific characteristics of the ILS graduate students and that the program was time intensive for both the coordinator and the Web master.

Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate that the four library partners in the WPLP have a shared mission that provides a foundation for collaboration. The academic library and the three public libraries have a common mission to serve the citizens of the state and all of them are currently actively engaged in ongoing outreach activities in support of that mission. This program is an important element of public outreach for all concerned. Each institution shares in the expenses of providing services at approximately the same level. Librarians at all four institutions also value the return on that investment in that both common and discrete goals are being reached. (See figure Appendix C) So those attributes of good collaboration are present in the WPLP to a satisfactory degree.

However, based on the data collected, there is some question as to the sustainability of the program. It relies heavily on the participation of unpaid volunteers to provide the services offered. The role of coordinator is crucial to operations and requires significant time and effort on the part of the volunteer who performs this function. The academic librarian, who serves as Web master by designing and maintaining the Web sites, also contributed 10 to 15 hours per month. The current coordinator has made every attempt to streamline the process of scheduling workshops and volunteers by using available technology and collaborating closely with the Web master. This has made it possible to reduce the time required for coordinating scheduling by approximately 50%. This should facilitate things for subsequent students to assume responsibility as coordinator. In order to insure the sustainability of the program, it is

necessary to devise a more consistent method for this position to be passed from one volunteer to another or the role of coordinator might be assumed by a paid student intern or a staff member of one of the participating institutions. This would necessitate a significant increase in the financial contribution on the part of one or all of the libraries.

Additional support might also be obtained by enlisting another potential stakeholder in the program. Due to the relationship of the student volunteers to the ILS school, it is already indirectly involved in the workshop program. The participating students are benefited by this activity and the benefits they have reported are directly related to their coursework. By becoming an active partner in this program the ILS school could take advantage of ongoing service-oriented instruction in courses that are related to public librarianship, management, user instruction, and even academic librarianship. The ILS school might participate by providing a paid graduate assistant to serve as coordinator of the program and also by encouraging faculty to include service-learning components in regular coursework. The benefit to the ILS program would be two-fold: first, enhanced instruction through innovative service oriented learning and secondly, an additional fulfillment of the university's mandate to participate in community engagement activities.

In addition, the vast majority of the volunteer instructors are ILS students. Even though these volunteers express satisfaction with their experience and many are highly committed to the goals of the program, they are often only available when their class schedules mesh with workshop schedules. When indicating their reasons for not participating, 83.3% of survey respondents indicated that it was due to schedule conflicts

and one volunteer indicated that changes in class schedule caused him/her to discontinue participation.

The cohort of students who were engaged from the beginning in developing this program exhibited a high level of commitment to the program. However, many of them have since graduated and most of them have moved away from the area as they find jobs in other locations. This has created the necessity for increased efforts to recruit new volunteers. A possible solution to this problem might be to actively encourage library staff to participate as instructors or floaters. At two of the public libraries a staff member assists or teaches at most workshop sessions as part of their regular duties. Several academic librarians have also consistently participated as instructors for special topic workshops. The active participation of both academic and public library staff would provide a more dependable source of instructors to supplement the pool of volunteer instructors.

Is the workshop program replicable in other settings? It is the consensus of participants in this study that indeed it is. All but one of the respondents to the volunteer instructor survey indicated that they would definitely consider promoting such a program as part of their professional activities regardless of whether they planned to seek employment in academic or public libraries settings. One respondent expressed reservations based on some of the same questions of sustainability that have been addressed above. This individual also questioned the appropriateness of this kind of collaboration between public and academic libraries indicating a basic difference in organizational culture between these two types of institutions. Each of the librarians interviewed also indicated that they felt the program was replicable; although one

librarian mentioned that the setting might be dependant on the availability of a large body of available volunteers like the ILS Master's students.

From its inception, the program described in this study has been loosely structured and highly informal. A final step to enhance both the sustainability and reliability of this program is to formalize it with binding agreements that give the partnership structure by spelling out the rights and responsibilities of each party. Both Todaro (2005/2006) and Lukas (Four Keys...) recommend that formal written agreements and guidelines are necessary to strengthen any collaboration. Lukas writes:

“A charter, also known as an operating agreement or memorandum of understanding, lays out the rules that govern the collaboration. The charter should include the collaboration's mission and purpose; values and assumptions; vision, timelines and milestones; members and membership policies; roles and contributions, policies (competition, conflicts of interest, financial relationships); and norms (participation, decision-making, communication, conflict, meetings). It's especially important to decide what the agreements are for leadership and decision-making.” (p. 3)

The workshop program is a valuable resource to the community. Both workshop participants and volunteer instructors have testified of the benefits they have received as a direct result of the program. It would be worthwhile to strengthen this collaboration by including the ILS school as an active partner and by formalizing it with written agreements.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

When you hear the word “outreach” what kinds of activities come to mind?

What kind of initiatives does the library actively pursue to fulfill its mission of public engagement?

What three words would you use to describe the WPLP?

Does the WPLP fit in the library’s efforts as outreach to the community?

Do you consider the library an appropriate partner/stakeholder for this initiative? Why or why not?

Please describe the costs of this program to the library.

Have the workshops had a noticeable impact on the library and library services? How?

Have the workshops had a noticeable impact on library staff and their work patterns? Is so, how?

What professional experience have you had with other kinds of collaborative partnerships?

Has experience with the WPLP caused you to consider other kinds of partnerships? How?

To whom do you report statistics and other information regarding the program and how do you report them?

If the program were to be discontinued, would an effort be made to continue providing these kinds of instructional services to library patrons? If, how might that be possible?

Appendix B

Survey Questions

Please describe how you participated in the WPLP.

If you were interested in teaching/floating at workshops but didn't, please, indicate why.

Please check all that apply.

- Schedule conflicts
- Didn't receive timely information
- Transportation issues
- Fear of public speaking
- Lack of expertise/teaching experience
- Inadequate training
- Other/comments

How do you feel participation as a workshop volunteer benefited you?

- Improve teaching skills
- Credit for a field experience/independent study
- No significant benefit
- Gain confidence as public speaker
- Helped define career goals
- Satisfaction of helping others
- Other/comments

Would you recommend that other SILS students/librarians participate?

- No
- Yes
- Explain/comment

Did you report your participation in regular statistics reports?

- Yes
- No
- N/A
- Explain/comment

Did you have interactions with librarians at the public library during your session/s? If

so, what was that like?

Do you feel that similar collaboration between academic libraries and public libraries are appropriate? Why or why not?

In your job, are you actively encouraged to participate in community outreach programs?

- Yes
- No
- Explain/comment

Based on your experience with the WPLP, do you feel that you would be willing to promote similar kinds of collaborative programs in the context of your job as a practicing professional? Please explain.

Other Comments

Appendix C

